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Thursday, December 10, 2009

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The past week in headlines

At-a-glance news...

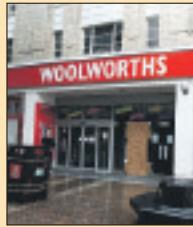
Grand Prix tickets bonanza

With news that the British Grand Prix is to stay at Silverstone, ticket sales topped £1m in 24 hours



Deal close on Woolies site

An as-yet-unnamed retailer is set to move into the ex-Woolies store in Northampton early in the new year



Nursery is top of the tots

A nursery in Northampton stands out from the crowd as it scoops top national award



Changes ahead at popular school

EDUCATION chiefs are set to launch a radical overhaul of admissions policies to the critically over-subscribed Caroline Chisholm School in Northampton

Under new proposals being considered by Northamptonshire County Council, scores of families living in Grange Park and Collingtree will no longer be living in the outstanding secondary school's linked area, with their children instead attending primary schools which feed into nearby Roade.

Meanwhile, Hardingside families will be re-aligned with Caroline Chisholm, in the hope that the shake-up will cut down on the number of parents applying for a place at the Wootton Fields school while increasing those applying for both Roade and Abbeyfields School, in Mereway.

A public consultation into the plans will be carried out in the new year but Paul Burnett, director of children's services at the county council, said the changes were vital if the schools in south west Northampton were to keep up with predicted population growth.

He said: "We don't want to be introducing new admissions criteria for schools every year because that creates

uncertainty for parents about the future of their children's education.

"With these proposals, we are seeking a long-term solution. We have looked at every possible factor available to us to allow us to predict a full range of scenarios for the future of this area."

The move follows admissions chaos at Caroline Chisholm School this year, after seven families withdrew their children from the schools system and decided to teach them privately because they had failed to get a place at Caroline Chisholm, despite living in the catchment area.

If introduced, the council hopes the new admissions system could serve all three secondary schools for at least a decade.

Mr Burnett said he recognised the new proposals would not be popular for some families, particularly those living in Grange Park.

He said: "There will be some who benefit and others who do not benefit, some will be pleased and others not. But we want to stress that this is only a proposal at the moment.

"A full consultation will take place in the new year. We want to hear from any parents who have concerns about this and know what their concerns are, so we can work towards finding solutions for them and making sure the needs of their children are met."



■ Caroline Chisholm School in Northampton has been at the centre of controversy over its catchment area. Now the county council is proposing radical changes which will affect hundreds of families

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Kairos on course

A NEW £400,000 faith-based community centre is set to open early next year at Grange Park in Northampton.

The Kairos Centre will include a Fairtrade coffee shop for members of the public to come in and chat and quiet spaces will be available for personal reflection and prayer.

The building of the centre is due to be completed by January.

Lisa Smith, a member of Grange Park Church, who is project managing the development, said: "Although the building had originally been earmarked for community use, it had been laying empty and undeveloped for quite some

time. The council offered it to Grange Park Church about three years ago. Since then we have had a huge fundraising campaign with the aim of raising £400,000. We are now in the final stages and are in a position to open in 2010."

The centre will include a conference room that can be booked out. It will also host well-being clinics, parent and toddler groups and youth and children's events, with the overall aim of becoming a hub for the community.

For more details about the centre or how to become a volunteer, call Lisa Smith on Northampton 762038 or email her at lisa.smith@kairoscentre.co.uk.

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Ideas to keep travellers out



■ Milverton Vale residents are anxious to resolve the regular problem presented by travellers

Submitted picture

RESIDENTS of a street plagued by problems with groups of travellers setting up camp on their doorstep have called for permanent metal posts to be installed to restrict access to the land.

The pleas come after an offer from a local firm to install free bunding was met with concern by neighbours.

Fed-up homeowners in Milverton Crescent, Abington Vale, had previously pressed for bunding to be installed to prevent travellers from gaining access to the area but residents are divided as to whether or not they want to see the earthworks, and a 150-name petition against the proposals has subsequently been handed in.

Three separate residents' groups have now been set up to tackle the problem, with a number of alter-

native measures, including steel posts, also put forward.

Ib Scott-Iversen, aged 77, of Milverton Crescent has lived in the area with his wife Vera for 41 years and said he was keen for a resolution.

He added: "The problem is we get travellers who usually visit twice a year. When you get to our age it is a problem, they are intimidating.

"We have raised funding to install two-foot-high steel posts which would stop unauthorised vehicles.

"We have 148 signatures on a petition against the bunding, but in favour of keeping people off the land and to put the posts up."

Neighbour Lin Reeve, aged 70, said: "If there was bunding it would spoil the park. It is also dangerous as children will ride over the bunds and could be unable to stop before they reach the road.

"The bunding will make it difficult for children and parents from Bridgewater Drive Primary to get to the school, we want to make our area pleasing for everyone."

The issue came to a head at a meeting earlier this year when more than 100 residents met council staff and representatives from the Countywide Travellers Unit (CTU).

A spokesman for Northampton Borough Council said: "Installing either bunding or metal posts would cost taxpayers around £15,000. This is a significant amount of money, which we don't feel we can justify when the scale of the problem is taken into account.

"We have explained to residents that they have the option of doing nothing or going for the free bunding. They need to get together and decide amongst themselves which option they want to pursue."

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Advice follows arson attack

FIRE advice has been handed to residents in Northampton following a late-night arson attack on a three-storey block of flats in Delapre.

The *Chronicle and Echo* reported how Kimberley Rowlands, aged 27, was forced to drop six-year-old Kyron and three-year-old Kayla into the arms of neighbours waiting below after fire ripped through the stairwell of the block of flats, in Coverack Close, Delapre, around 10.30pm on Monday, November 30.



■ Kimberley Rowlands and her three-year-old daughter, Kayla

Two buggies had been set alight on the ground floor of the flats near to the stairwell.

Northampton Borough Council, which own the flats, has now given council tenants information with advice on what to do if there is a fire.

Councillor Sally Beardsworth (*Lib Dem, Kingsthorpe*) said: "What happened in Coverack Close was absolutely dreadful and must have been very traumatic for those who live there.

"However, this is a timely opportunity to remind people of what they should do in the event of a fire. A lot of the information we are giving is common sense, but it can be quite easy to forget and so I think having this reminder which can be kept in the flat is very useful."

The advice is available on the housing section of the borough council's website at www.northampton.gov.uk. For a free home fire safety check call Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service on 0800 389 9950.

Circuit has GP for next 17 years

SILVERSTONE Circuit has retained the British Grand Prix for the next 17 years after a deal was clinched between circuit bosses and Formula One supremo Bernie Ecclestone.

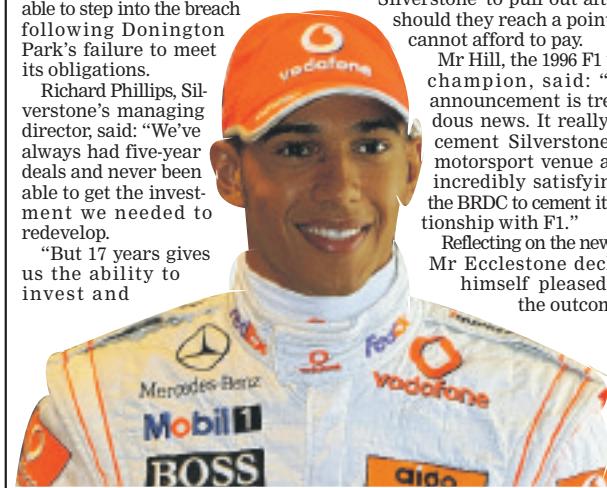
The news was confirmed at a London press conference attended by Damon Hill, president of the British Racing Drivers' Club (BRDC) and Silverstone Circuits Limited, with the contract to run until 2026.

The £310million deal came about after Mr Ecclestone agreed to forego a further £60 million.

It ensures the oldest race on the F1 calendar retains its place in motorsport history at the world-famous Northamptonshire track, with Silverstone able to step into the breach following Donington Park's failure to meet its obligations.

Richard Phillips, Silverstone's managing director, said: "We've always had five-year deals and never been able to get the investment we needed to redevelop.

"But 17 years gives us the ability to invest and



■ Lewis Hamilton welcomed news that the British Grand Prix will be on the calendar for 2010 and said it was great the race would be at Silverstone

move forward. We've always had the belief the British Grand Prix was an important cornerstone of Formula One but, with Bernie, you're never quite sure."

Phillips described the deal as "peace in our time" between the circuit's owners, the British Racing Drivers' Club, and Ecclestone.

"The relationship with Formula One Management has been improving," added Phillips. "There's a good working relationship with him now and we don't have any issues."

It was understood Mr Ecclestone was looking for a seven per cent annual increase on an initial £12 million starting fee. But Silverstone Circuits Ltd and the BRDC are adamant they have not agreed a deal that would bankrupt the track. It is believed a clause allows Silverstone to pull out after 10 years, should they reach a point when they cannot afford to pay.

Mr Hill, the 1996 F1 world champion, said: "This announcement is tremendous news. It really does cement Silverstone as a motorsport venue and is incredibly satisfying for the BRDC to cement its relationship with F1."

Reflecting on the new deal, Mr Ecclestone declared himself pleased with the outcome.

■ The Silverstone Grand Prix



■ Bernie Ecclestone

He said: "The team at Silverstone already know how to organise a good event, and now everyone can look forward to next summer at Silverstone."

Sports minister Gerry Sutcliffe said:



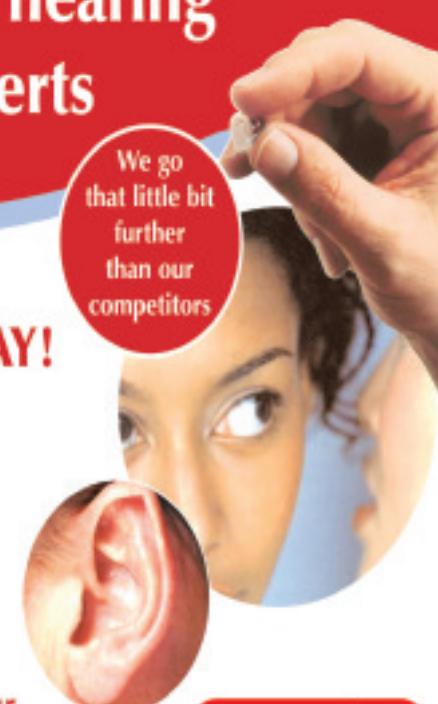
■ Damon Hill

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FACT File

THE following donations were made at the Community Gifts presentation evening:

- The Mayor of Northampton's charities – Dogs for the Disabled and the Disney Children's ward at Northampton General Hospital – £10,000.
- Hinwick Hall College – £1,100 plus £1,000 from the reader vote.
- Kingsthorpe College – £1,100.
- Nene Valley PHAB – £4,000 plus £1,000 from the reader vote.
- Remap – £400.
- St John Ambulance – £3,000.
- The Bliss Charity School – £1,000.
- Thomas's Fund – £600 plus £1,000 from the reader vote.
- Tools for Self Reliance – £1,000.
- Wellingborough Volunteer Bureau – £1,800.

Cash boost for good causes



■ The Community Gifts Awards presents charities and good causes with cheques ranging from £400 to £10,000

CE picture by LOUISE O'CALLAGHAN mnce-03-12-09-LOC83

GOOD causes from around the county are celebrating after pocketing a share of £30,000.

Twelve charity and community organisations from Northamptonshire were presented with cheques ranging from £400 to £10,000 as part of the annual Community Gifts Awards held by Barclaycard. Three of the groups received a bonus £1,000 each after readers of the *Chron* and its sister paper the *Evening Telegraph* voted for them as

the most worthy causes. These three were Hinwick Hall College near Wellingborough which provides residential care to 60 disabled students, Thomas' Fund which provides musical therapy for young people with life limiting illnesses and Nene Valley PHAB, a social club for physically disabled and able-bodied adults.

Thomas' Fund is named after Thomas Smith who died aged 10 of a neuro-degenerative condition but who, during his life, gained a lot from music.

Thomas's mother, Lucy Smith, who co-founded the charity, said: "We are so pleased and surprised with this. We applied for £600 to buy three lyres, which are Medieval instruments and they make a very good sound for the children playing them."

Hinwick Hall College had initially applied to for almost £1,100 to buy ultraviolet lighting equipment for its multi sensory programme. Nene Valley PHAB asked for £4,000 to run an ambulance to pick up members and

Wren Spinney Community Special School, in Kettering, applied for £2,000 of video equipment.

The ceremony was held at Greens Restaurant in Northampton. Hotspot areas for anti-social crime will also be targeted.

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Drugs kit to be issued to police

A NEW drugs testing kit will be used by police officers in Northampton to crack down on the use of illegal substances in licensed premises.

As part of the national licensing and alcohol week of action, high-profile patrols will be stepped up, while officers will work with bouncers and Trading Standards officials to ensure clubs and pubs are not allowing drug abuse inside venues.

Meanwhile, test purchase operations will be carried out to make sure alcohol is not being sold to youngsters under the age of 18.

A spokeswoman for Northamptonshire Police said the drugs testing kit would be deployed after it was funded by reclaimed proceeds of crime.

She added: "Through the Proceeds of Crime funding, officers have obtained a drugs testing machine, which will be used at different venues to screen for drugs use."

"During the festive season, in the lead up to Christmas and the New Year, activity will focus on enforcement, education and awareness to ensure that people out and about have a safe and enjoyable time. Officers will be out wearing headcams – helmet mounted cameras that record activity – to allow officers to gather evidence when dealing with incidents as well as provide reassurance to the public."

The ceremony was held at Greens Restaurant in Northampton. Hotspot areas for anti-social crime will also be targeted.

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Friends fundraise in Marc's memory

HUNDREDS of well-wishers descended on Benham Sports Arena to support a fun day in memory of Royal Marine Corporal Marc Birch (pictured).

The Royal Marine was killed in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, last December.

Close family friend Dani Martin, aged 21, organised the event last Saturday in Moulton on the first anniversary of his death to raise funds for charities Marc supported.

She said: "In the last year, his family have raised £23,000 for charity in Marc's memory through fundraising events.

"They're just inspirational; I don't know how they do it. Because they've been so fantastic, and particularly it being almost a year since Marc died, I wanted to do something for them in memory of Marc, without them having to organise



anything or take responsibility for running it."

Face painting, fancy dress, raffles and bungee-trampolining were on offer, with cakes and goodies to refresh parents.

Dani has coached at the Northampton Trampoline and Gymnastics Academy, based in the centre, for nine years. Coaches, including trampolinist Jaimie Moore, were on hand during the day while children – and parents – enjoyed the facilities.

The charities benefiting from the funds raised include Help for Heroes and Northamptonshire TLC Trust, which supports children living with cancer.

Mourners lined the streets of Northampton for the 26-year-old Royal Marine's funeral a year ago. Known as "Birchy", he was a member of 45 Commando and was one of three men killed by a 13-year-old suicide bomber in Afghanistan on December 12, 2008.



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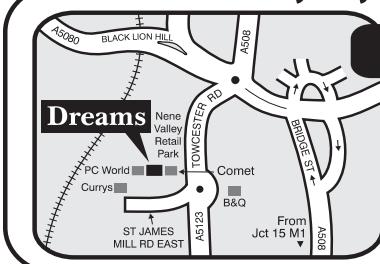
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Impaled dog saved by owner

A WOMAN used first aid knowledge learned as a teenager to save the life of her dog after he was impaled on a six-inch spike of wood while playing in bushes in Northampton woodland.

Joanna Knowles, aged 33, of Lings, was walking six-year-old Harry in nearby Lings Wood last Wednesday morning when he returned to her with a large jagged piece of wood sticking out of his chest.

If the wood had moved just a few millimetres the West Highland cross terrier would have died instantly. But the mum-of-one was able to recall medical knowledge learned as a teenage member of St John Ambulance.

Harry was rushed to the PDSA Pet Aid hospital in Northampton town centre where vets removed the wood in a 40-minute life-saving operation.

The former rescue dog is now recovering at home with a six-inch scar and 13 stitches to show for his ordeal.

Joanna said she employed human first aid learned as a teenager to save his life. "All I could think to do was to treat him like a human patient," she said.

"I remember learning about stab wounds and how you shouldn't remove the object but should pack around it. So I put lots of towels around and underneath him so the branch wouldn't move. I'm just thankful he survived."

"He's such a lovely dog and I would have been heartbroken to lose him."



■ Joanna Knowles with daughter Amber, aged six, and Harry
CE picture by KELLY COOPER 091204KC35



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■ The Chronicle & Echo
last month

Cutbacks delay travel boost

EXTENSIONS to the concessionary bus fare scheme which would have benefited the elderly and disabled travelling in Northampton are "unlikely to happen very soon".

The Northamptonshire Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme was launched two years ago and allows pensioners to travel for free across the county all day throughout the week. In addition, there are proposals to introduce so-called "companion travel" for eligible disabled pass holders within Northampton

out, the findings of which formed the background of proposed changes, which include plans to allow free travel all day throughout the week. In addition, there are proposals to introduce so-called "companion travel" for eligible disabled pass holders within Northampton

ton and in other districts.

The review discovered almost unanimous support for the move, which would allow free bus travel for those accompanying a disabled passenger.

But with the cost of these additional services likely to top £425,000, and an increasingly tight budget, council bosses have revealed the proposals are unlikely to be implemented in the near future.

Councillor David Perkins (*Lib Dem, Boughton Green*), portfolio holder for finance, told the *Chronicle & Echo*: "In the current climate, with the budget issues we have, it is unlikely to happen very soon."

Councillor Perkins pointed to

an increasing gap between Government funding and the cost of running the service as the reason why the service could not be expanded at present.

He said increased take-up of the service and an ageing population was putting added pressure on the existing scheme and that Government funding was not rising in line with costs.

Last month the Government said it would not increase funding to Northampton Borough Council for the concessionary bus fare scheme. As a result, Councillor Perkins estimated the cost of the service to the council would rise to £1.8 million in the next financial year.

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■ Manager Andrew Chapman outside the World's End pub in Ecton with staff members. *CE* picture by SHARON LUCEY 091204SL15

Pub jobs saved by buy-out

FIFTY-EIGHT members of staff at two historic Northamptonshire pubs have been given an early Christmas present after they were told their jobs have been saved.

The future of The World's End, in Ecton, Northampton, and the Olde Coach House, Ashby St Ledgers, were put in doubt last month when parent company, Mercury Inns, went into administration. The two popular pubs then closed, prompting fears staff would be left out of work just weeks before Christmas.

However, the manager of the pubs has revealed he bought the businesses from administrators, saving the jobs of 34 members of staff at the World's End and 24 at the Olde Coach House.

Andrew Chapman said Mercury Inns went into administration on Monday, November 23, after the company's bank, Barclays, refused to lend it any more money. After securing financial backing from HSBC, Mr Chapman then purchased the two pubs - along with The Park, in Bedford - and immediately rehired all the old staff.

After re-opening for business, the new owner said: "Everybody was made redundant by the administrators. I then took everybody back on the next day."

"We have saved more than 100 jobs in the three pubs and when people come in to the pubs they will see the same faces, the same managers and the same staff."

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Milton Keynes Talent Shines at Children in Need

Extravaganza

The Chrysalis Theatre in Willen witnessed a truly unique evening of entertainment on Friday. The packed house was treated to the most diverse show Milton Keynes has ever seen. As with all memorable productions the beginning of the show had its moments of high drama. Gremlins in the sound booth meant that local RnB stars BKay & Kazz were called upon to



Emillia Beattie
from the
Woppard & Daniels
Academy of Dance

"An Incredible night of performance from everyone who took part."
Andy Jones MK Vibe

Picture Ian Burt

treat the audience to an a cappella rendition of their opening track 'My Girl'. By the time the sound was restored the the show was well under way and the two brothers had the audience rocking with their unique brand of Motown magic. Amazing dance performances from hip hop street company Sleek included an outstanding routine to Michael Jackson's Thriller, with full zombie costumes. Natalie Chua effortly hit the high notes with a moving rendition of Nessun Dorma, then had the audience spellbound with a stunning version of Angel which featured a faultless display from The Woppard and Daniels Academy of Dance. The ballet school performed a number of special pieces which featured dancers from every section of the academy. The audience were treated to an incredible mixture of quality dance performances and costumes from some of the most gifted young dancers in the region. Sahara Cee twice won the hearts of the audience with her incredible vocals one a duet with Kazz. Flaut were at their energetic best, bringing the unique sense of fun and enjoyment to their dance performances that has made them a firm favourite all over the city. Although the stage was brimming with entertainment and talent, the audience were even treated to a gospel choir in the foyer during the break. Fusion, who are fast establishing themselves as one of the premiere vocal groups in the UK gave a flawless performance whilst Pudsey was on hand to be photographed with the youngsters. The show had many outstanding performances, though special mention has to go to Evolution, a 30 strong contemporary choir who had the audience dancing in the isles and provided backing to Natalie Chua for an enchanting version of the hit single 'Run'. The concert and performances leading up to the event raised over £3000 for children in Need and was an amazing night for all involved.

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■ Councillor Paul Varnsverry at the controversial pedestrian crossing

CE picture by KELLY COOPER 091204KC16

Parents' fears over crossing

A PERILOUS pedestrian crossing next to a busy roundabout in Northampton has been labelled an "accident waiting to happen" by residents and borough councillors.

Deputy leader of the borough council, Paul Varnsverry, (Lib Dem, West Hunsbury) is calling on Northamptonshire County Council to review its decision to place the crossing within yards of the busy

Sixfields roundabout in Weedon Road, St James.

Mum Claire Invernizzi, who lives nearby, said: "It is ridiculous that the county council expects drivers to fly around a blind bend, only to slam on the brakes for parents taking their kids to and from the shops or school."

"Personally, I am really disappointed with the council's unwillingness to listen to local parents, who only want a safe way to cross the busy Weedon Road."

Councillor Varnsverry said: "A number of residents at Upton Grange have been in touch with me to report near-misses between pedestrians and drivers unaware that the lights are there. Young mums with baby buggies use the crossing every day. I am not happy with them being in harm's way."

A spokeswoman for Northamptonshire County Council said the authority was aware of the issue, and added: "We are looking into the concerns raised."

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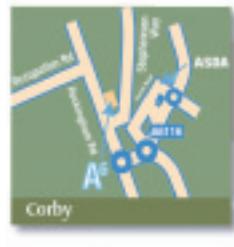
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RENTAL: £695 PCM

LOCATION: ABINGTON

CONTACT: ASHY LOWERY RESIDENTIAL 01604 609603

and a bathroom.

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RENTAL: £495 PCM

LOCATION: EARLS BARTON

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ABOVE RIGHT: This house in Central Avenue, Kingsthorpe, is for rent at £575 per calendar month.

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LOCATION: KINGSTHORPE

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POWELL
Ida

06.12.03.

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A sporty approach to family motoring

PEUGEOT'S first entry into the compact MPV market sector is remarkably successful, but then it did have the considerable knowhow of MPV-specialist sister company Citroen to call upon.

The 5008 adopts a sporty approach and is one of the better seven-seat vehicles to drive with the lively 1.6 THP petrol engine installed, but it still fills the family car role with aplomb thanks to a comfortable ride and a flexible seating system.

Some people are predisposed towards people carriers and others have people carriers thrust upon them. No matter how much a person might yearn for a nimble roadster or a powerful sports saloon, as the family expands and the domestic commitments mount, the motoring future inevitably starts to look increasingly MPV-shaped.

Peugeot claims to have the car that can salve this desire for sporti-

ness in motorists who should be more concerned with seven seats and storage solutions. It is called the 5008 and with a feisty turbocharged petrol engine installed, it might be on to something.

The compact MPV is big business across Europe but before the 5008 came along, Peugeot did not have one. By contrast, its sister company Citroen has built its range around people-carrying vehicles of all descriptions with its C4 Picasso established as a class leader in the very sector that the 5008 looks to muscle in on.

In no way could the Citroen Grand C4 Picasso be called sporty, so the fact the Peugeot 5008 rides on the same basic chassis as that car just shows what some new tyres, a wider track and various tweaks to the suspension components can do. The 5008 really is a dab hand on a twisty road and there aren't too many seven-seat vehicles you can



Peugeot 5008 1.6 THP

REVIEW BY STEVE WALKER

CAR: Peugeot 5008 1.6 THP

PRICES: £16,895-£23,695 - on the road

INSURANCE GROUPS: 7-11 (est)

CO2 EMISSIONS: 135-

178g/km

PERFORMANCE: 0-60mph 9.7s / top speed 121mph

MILES PER GALLON: 39.8mpg (combined)

STANDARD SAFETY

FEATURES: ABS with EBD, ESP, 6 airbags, 3-point seat belts.

WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?:

length/Width/Height 4529/1837/1639mm

say that about. For something of its size and weight, the car resists body roll well and feels planted on the road. It steers and stops in a way that inspires confidence and only the chunky manual gearbox on our car served as a major disappointment. More importantly, in what is still a people carrier, the 5008 serves up a comfortable ride and excellent refinement, the 1.6-litre THP petrol engine staying as quiet as a sulking teenager unless you are particularly boisterous with the throttle.

At 1,837mm wide without its wing mirrors, the 5008 is a large vehicle and can feel like it in traffic. Its short overhangs do help when manoeuvring, however, and so does the high driving position.

With a 0-62mph time of 9.7s, the 156bhp 1.6 THP engine is faster than the 150bhp 2.0-litre HDi diesel option on paper and shares that unit's muscular characteristics on the road without quite matching its strength. The turbocharger helps the THP produce its 240Nm maxi-

mum torque from just 1,400rpm which gives the 5008 a sprightly feel off the line and when accelerating out of bends.

The 5008 looks wide and low to the road, underlining its sporting bent. The lines are clean, simple and cohesive in a manner that too many Peugeot products of the last few years have failed to replicate.

Inside, Peugeot has been clever in creating a car that elevates its driver for a better view but retains the steeply-angled steering wheel and laid-back seating position that you would get in a conventional hatch.

The 1.6-litre THP petrol engine helps the 5008 deliver on its dynamic image. It is a fine unit with unusually strong low-end torque and a smooth power delivery. The running costs are higher than the diesel alternatives but this engine has the upper hand on performance and price.

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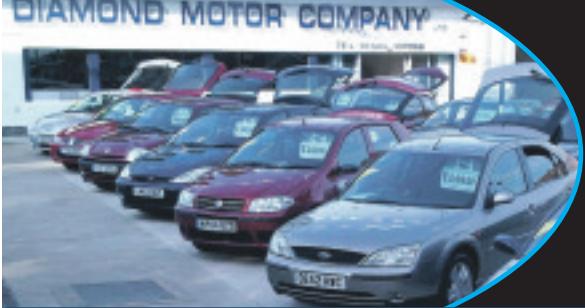
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06 55 Nissan Micra 1.2 5 door	metallic graphite grey very popular car has low mileage only 34,000 miles and is immaculate	£4,499
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02 02 Citroen Xsara Picasso 1.6 SX	Metallic Amethyst, C/locking, E/Windows, power steering, great popular family car	£3,299
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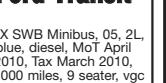
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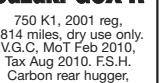
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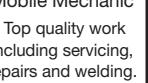
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Applications in writing with CV: gill.wright@cheltonbrown.co.uk

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For further details please contact Mrs S. Sharpe, Headteacher's PA, on (01933) 222039 or at ssharpe@wrenn.northants.sch.uk.

An application form can also be downloaded from the school's website: www.wrenn.northants.sch.uk

Deadline for receipt of applications: Friday 11th December 2009

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Application forms and further details can be obtained via email or by telephone from Pat Millward. Closing date for applications is Monday, 14 December 2009.

Lewis Road, Kettering, Northants NN15 6HE. Tel: (01536) 513063.

Email: pat.millward@southfield.northants.sch.uk

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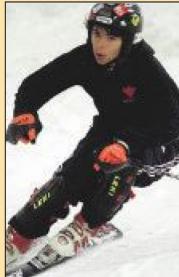
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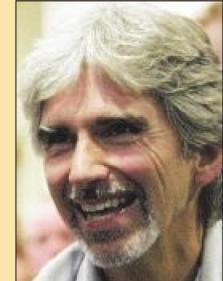
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At-a-glance sport...



Behnke aims for Olympics
Moulton's skiing prodigy Marek Behnke has set his sights on competing at the 2014 Olympics in Russia, according to his mother.



Silverstone will deliver
Damon Hill described Silverstone's 17-year deal to host the British Grand Prix as tough. The race was saved on Monday.



Heartbreak for Poppies
Kettering Town went down 5-1 at Leeds in the FA Cup second round but they took the League One leaders to extra time.

Curtis in plea for patience

JOHN CURTIS has issued a plea for patience from the Cobblers supporters.

The midfielder is confident the team can turn around a season which promised so much – but which has so far delivered very little.

Some critics even suggested in the wake of the home defeat to Hereford last week that the campaign was dead and buried.

But Curtis is confident that, with the fans' support, the squad can get back on track.

"I think it's too early to say that," he said. "It's only the first week of December and the Christmas period is always crucial.

"If you have a good Christmas and New Year you might be in a position to push on around Easter time, which I'm confident we can be.

"The message to people is just to be patient and stick with the team. It doesn't help anybody if people are pulling in different directions.

"The playing squad and the management are going to stay together and if we can all do that then I'm sure everything will be fine."

The Cobblers enjoyed a good run of results that started at the end of September and took in six games without defeat.

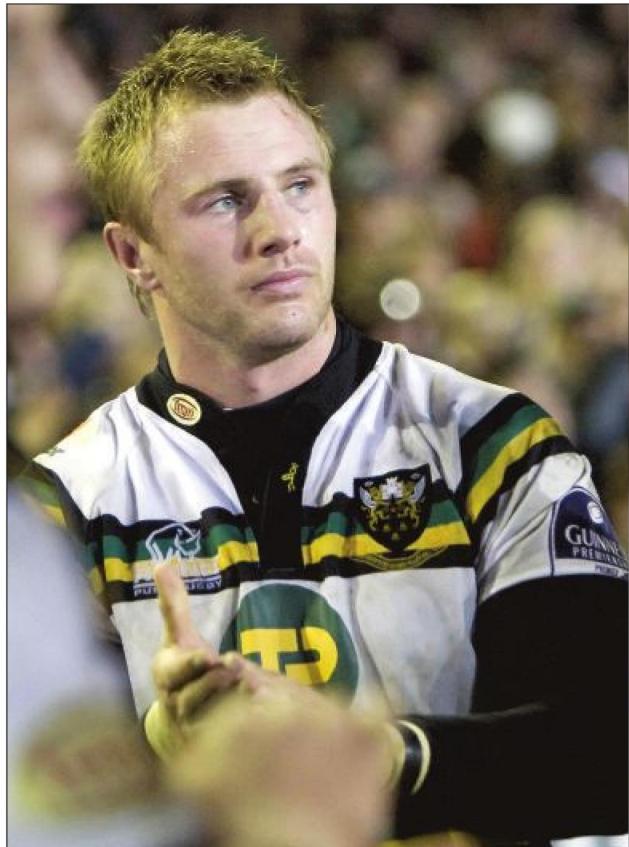
But only two of those outings were Coca-Cola League Two victories, and the sequence did little to advance the club's position in the basement division.

Curtis is confident, though, that if Northampton can get another unbeaten run under their belts, then things will start looking up.

"If you string a few results together you can shoot up the league," he said. "We had a little bit of a good spell and didn't really go anywhere, which was unfortunate for us.

"But if we have another good spell and maybe win three or four on the bounce then we'll be mid-table and then anything can happen from there. "Who knows? It will all get interesting a couple of months after Christmas."

The win is all that counts



■ Roger Wilson has told his Saints team mates to concentrate on just beating Treviso on Saturday, not on going out to get a try-scoring bonus point

IRISH powerhouse Roger Wilson has joined in the war against Britain's bonus culture.

Saints take on Treviso this weekend in the first of a Heineken Cup double header against the Italian champions, knowing a bonus-point win is a must if they are to qualify for the quarter-finals.

But Wilson has warned his Saints team mates not to become obsessed about running in four tries and becoming fixated by the bonus point.

He says they have to make sure they win Saturday's match at Franklin's Gardens first.

The No.8 said: "It is hard to talk about getting bonus points.

"It is a dangerous thing to do, going out and saying we want to get the bonus-point, because then you start throwing the ball around from the kick-off and it just doesn't work like that.

"You have got to be patient and it might not come until the last 20 minutes.

"We have got to concentrate on getting the win first and then see how it goes during the game."

Saints sit third in pool one, level on points with Treviso after both sides collected a win and a defeat in the opening two rounds back in October.

Both won at home, with Treviso pulling off one of the biggest shocks in the competition's history by beating French champions Perpignan 9-8, while Saints downed Munster in an emotionally-charged night at Franklin's Gardens.

The atmosphere on Saturday will be

By Ashley Potter

ashley.potter@northantsnews.co.uk

very different to that raucous occasion against the Magners League champions, with Saints fans expecting a comfortable win. Treviso have never qualified for the knockout stages, but they are top of the Italian Super 10 and after their superb win against Perpignan, Wilson is not taking them lightly.

Wilson said: "Italian teams are hard to break down and they play well as a team.

"They might not necessarily be blessed with the most flair, but they do play for each other and they are hard to break down, you have got to be patient.

"When Munster played them it took them 50 to 60 minutes to break them and then they eventually ran away with a bonus point. They beat Perpignan at home as well, so they will be no pushovers.

"They have got a lot of Italian national players in the team, so we will not be taking them lightly."

Wilson has played against Treviso before for Ulster and knows that, despite a generally woeful record in the Heineken Cup, which has seen them win just eight of their 58 games, they will play with plenty of passion.

Wilson said: "We managed to get a win over there when I was with Ulster; but it wasn't easy, they are physical games over there.

"They take a bit of a French mentality where they target their home games massively. Away, they can be a bit hit-and-miss, but at home they will be very difficult opponents."

